2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 753

by another name: sometimes it is called *nihléle*, in other cases again *pini*, words which have their equivalents in the Mataco and the Toba languages in the terms *aláh* and *kaipák* respectively. In regard to all these words we have to remember that they belong to the particular mystical terminology of the sorcerers and cannot exactly be translated into any civilized language. The Indian »arrow» or »splinter» is half an inanimate object, half a live being, half material, half spiritual, half natural, half supernatural. Whatever it is, it is to the primitive mind the most real thing possible, because its existence is manifested by its dreadful effects.

C 754

The Choroti Indian, who works evil against his fellow-tribesmen by throwing spells against them, is called a wizard (*ayïeu*). The expression for the nefarious operation itself is in the Choroti language *páhu ahuli sikiätsä*, (»to work evil against a fellow-man by means of witchcraft»). For the purpose of bewitching another Indian the sorcerer tries if possible to get hold of something that has been in close contact with the victim's body, for instance a single hair, a little saliva when he has spat on the ground, something of his excrement, a piece of his clothes, etc., and uses these things as vehicles for his curses. But even a medicine-man or curer, as we have seen, is called *ayïeu*, and there is thus no essential difference between an Indian practising black or nefarious magic and one practising white magic. A man in possession of a guardian spirit may use his art either for the benefit of his fellow-tribesmen or to harm them, according as to whether he regards them as his friends or as his foes.

C [164] 753

Besides rheumatism, affections of the throat and the chest, arising from chill, are very common among the Chaco Indians during the dry season. The Indian explanation invariably is that an evil spirit has entered into that particular part of the body where the pain is felt. If a Choroti Indian suffers from head-ache and I ask him what is the matter with him, he will answer that he has a *möhsek* in the head; if he suffers from a catarrh, he will point to his throat or his chest and say that a *möhsek* has taken its seat in either of these parts of the body. In a village I once met an old woman who had her right fore-arm paralyzed, evidently in consequence of a fit of apoplexy. She explained to me that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and had tied a dirty woollen band round the arm at the wrist so as to prevent the evil spirit from penetrating further into the body.

C 761

If the demon is allowed to complete his work of destruction in the